THE WRECKING TRAIN.

It Looks Homely, But When It's Needed It Is Needed Badly.

Accidents will happen occasionally on the best managed railroads, and sometimes bad wrecks happen, the cause of which frequently is a mystery, and the tracks are blocked for hours. For every minute the track remains blocked money and time are lost, and passenger and freight traffic are interrupted. So the railroads are always prepared, and within thirty minutes after a wreck has happened a wrecking train is on the way with a trained crew of men, and if the telegram announcing the wreck says that passengers or employes are injured, the wrecking train comes along with its physicians, bandages and cots. A wrecking outfit is about the homeliest thing owned by a railroad company, but when it is needed it is needed badly.

The wrecking cars are kept at the end of a division, and are directly under the control of the superintendent of that division. The wrecking train is composed of three cars and a powerful locomotive, and all the cars are fitted with air brakes. The first car is what is known as the truck car. The body of the car is very low, and upon it are carried two extra pairs of trucks, rails, cross-ties, and spikes, for sometimes the track is torn up in a wreck. The second car is the wrecking car. It is built of the heaviest timber, and is mounted on two pairs of small, heavy trucks. Half of the car is covered over and the other half is a mere platform, but arising from the center is a powerful derrick with a 28-foot beam. With this powerful contrivance, trucks, cars and locomotives are swung about. The covered portion of the car resembles the inside of a storeroom of a ship, as there are so many cables hanging around.

In one end of the car are two closets, one containing the food for the crew. The locker is always well filled, for there is no telling when the wrecking train may be called into service. The other closet or locker contains medicines, bandages, and a portable telegraph outfit, with several coils of wire. If the wreck is a bad one the instrument is brought into use. An operator is picked up at the first station along the road, and when the scene of the accident is roached the wires are set and a telegraph office is establish. The car carries rope of every size and kind up to three inches in diameter, hydraulic jacks for raising engines and cars, levers, pulleys and derrick tackle of all kinds. On the Louisville & Nashville first division wrecking cars there are carried 300 feet of manila three-inch rope for pulling engines on the track, 300 feet of two-inch full line for pulling purposes, 275 feet 1¾-inch rope for the derrick, two 60-foot sections of three-inch switch rope for pulling on cars, 240 feet 2¼-inch rope for the same purpose, and 230 feet of three-inch rope for pulling on trucks, and 500 feet for guy lines. The next car is the "block car," containing short blocks of wood of every size for blocking up cars and locomotives.

At every wreck cars are generally tumbled about in confusion, and the wrecking crew begin on these. The shattered ones are pushed off the track, and those left in a little better condition are put on the track and drawn away. After this is done there is one or more disabled engines. The heavy cables on the wrecking car are attached to the disabled locomotive, and a live one at the other end of the rope generally, by hard work, pulls the disabled locomotive back on the track. When the track is clear, the wrecking train picks up all the iron and trucks and comes back to town.—Boston Herald.

AMERICAN LAWYERS.

Lord Coleridge Tells Wherein They Differ From the English.

There is one possibly impending change. I mean the introduction of the American practice as to our profession; the allowing the functions of the attorney and the functions of the barrister to be exercised by the same person, writes Lord Coleridge in the Contemporary Review. It is true that in the great cities of America, where there are firms of lawyers, the principles of natural selection send some of the firms into court and keep others in chambers, so that the practice a good deal modifies the principle. But the principle remains, and I believe the extension of it to England is not so very far off. Whether it will be a benefit or not I do not feel sure.

I once asked Mr. Benjamin, who had experience of both systems, which, upon the whole, he thought the best. He replied that the question could not be answered in a word. "If," he said, "you ask me which is best fitted for producing from time to time a dozen or a score of very eminent and highly-cultivated men, men fit to play a great part in public affairs and stand up for the oppressed and persecuted in times of trouble and danger, I should say at once the English. If you ask me which is the best in ordinary times for the vast majority of clients, I answer at once the American."

This was very weighty and very impartial evidence, and I think, if Mr. Benjamin was right, that what is clearly for the benefit of the vast majority of clients is certain to be established in the end. Without expressing any opinion whatever upon recently-controverted facts which I can not do and which would be quite improper for me if I could, I may say so much as this, that I think they have appreciably hastened the advent of the change.

—The Gray's Harbor Times has the following: J. D. Lowry, who has just returned from Quinaiult reservation, brings an account of the capture of a large whale off the Quinaiult river. The Indians of that place engage in whale-fishing as a regular vocation, using their canoes and crude appliances for ensnaring the monsters of the deep with great skill. This particular whale, forty-five feet in length, they were three days and three nights in subduing and bringing to shore. It is a coast whale, its value to the Indians being about $100.

—Scene in a provision store: "Ma sent me down fo' a pound ob libber an' she wants de bone well cracked."—Boston Herald.

A SPIDER'S PATIENCE.

Rebuilding Its Web Many Times in Spite of Repeated Failures.

The writer spent a full hour a few days ago watching a spider managing his snares and trapping victims. He was so deliberate, calculating, cold-blooded and merciless that one could scarcely keep from shivering at the hideous creature's lack of mercy. And yet his persistence and unflagging energy fascinated one. No matter how often his net broke, he set to work to repair it again. No matter how long it took him to secure a captive, he patiently wound and wound his fragile thread until the victim was bound fast and hard.

His meshes were stretched in a corner, and almost at the same moment a fly and a miller became entangled in them. Instantly the bandit insect lowered himself toward the miller. When the miller saw her enemy approaching, she revolved furiously, beating the air wildly with her light wings. The spider was whirling on his web with lightning-like rapidity, but he clung there stubbornly until the miller stopped her struggle for rest. Then cautiously the black villain approached nearer. Again the shadowy wings whirled and again the spider flew in small circles, but he did not retire. And so inch by inch the passionless little savage closed with the terrified miller. At last he made a spring. Around went the two in a brown whirl and the spider shot up his life-line. He had fastened another line to the miller.

The spider went back to the fly and made its bonds more secure. Again he fastened threads to the miller, each time working his way slowly to her, and then pouncing upon her to fasten her in another thread.

Once the miller almost freed herself and fell away from the web, hanging only by a single fine thread. Stubbornly the spider went to work to do all his task over again. At last when it was seen that the miller was hopelessly caught the writer released her. It was found that all her legs were bound closely together, so careful had been the spider's work.

In tearing her away the writer had destroyed the web, and while the miller's feet were being freed the indomitable spider built him another trap, working sullenly and persistently. This done he retired to his corner only to come forth like a midnight highwayman when his next victim was trapped.

Nothing could discourage the spider. Twice a great mosquito was fastened in the meshes and each time while the spider was trying to fasten him so that he could not escape the mosquito broke away. Repairs began at once, and soon the spider went back to his corner to wait for another prisoner.

The writer swept away the web entirely and went away. Half an hour later when he returned the untiring spider was rebuilding his snare. His will and determination this time conquered, for who does not admire dogged resolution that will not down?—N. Y. Tribune.

A VERY TALL CHIMNEY.

The Way an Iron Tower Was Built and Fastened Together.

The following are particulars of a wrought-iron factory chimney of a somewhat novel description, which has been built at Creusot. The total height is 270 feet, the diameter 23 feet at the base and 7 feet 6 inches at the top, the total weight being 80 tons, exclusive of masonry foundations. The latter are carried 3 feet 3 inches above the ground and weigh about 300 tons. The shaft was built in successive rings, each 4 feet 1 inch high, the thickness varying from 9-16 inch at the base to ¼ inch at the top. The nine lower rings were formed of eight plates each, the upper ones of four plates each. The base was encircled by a massive angle iron bolted to the foundation. The eight lower rings were lined with fire brick.

The erection of the chimney occupied seventy days, including taking down the flying scaffold. The latter was of a somewhat novel character. It consisted of a central wrought iron tube seven inches in diameter, and was provided at the bottom with four wooden cross bars or arms so clamped that their length could be adjusted to suit the varying diameter of the chimney, carrying the internal platform. These arms rested on angle brackets refitted to the interior of the plates. The upper part of the central tube carried four cross arms or jibs, each consisting of a pair of timbers stiffened by raking struts from the central tube. From their outer ends was slung the exterior circular platform.

The latter consisted of a pair of angle-iron rings, to the outer edge of which was riveted a plate-iron fence, while the inner was provided with T-iron stanchions. Radial bearing timbers resting on these rings and adjustable endwise to suit the varying diameter of the chimney, carried the platform, an annular space being left just sufficient for hoisting the plates. The latter operation was effected by a rope passing over an adjustable pulley fixed to each rib in turn, and carried down a central tube to a snatch-block fixed at the bottom of the chimney. As each successive ring was riveted up two pairs of bars were laid across, by which the scaffold was slung by four jackscrews furnished by rachet collars, and thus raised high enough to take a bearing on the next set of angle brackets.

The complete scaffold weighed about four tons, and the heaviest plate about eight hundred weight. The total cost of the chimney without foundation was about $8,000.—Engineering Journal.

—Hungry Man's Dinner.—Take three slices of salt pork and cut into bits and freshen. Make a nice biscuit dough. Roll out one half an inch thick, lay the pork on and sprinkle pepper on it. Roll up as a cherry pudding, pin securely in a cloth and boil three hours, eat with apple, butter or any other sauce.—Yankee Blade.

Employer—"James, it's all right for you to take a day off now and then, but there's no use lying about it." Colored Porter—"Lyin', sah?" Employer—"You told me you were going to your uncle's funeral yesterday, but I hear you went to a picnic." Colored Porter—"Well, sah, I did go a black berryin'."—America.

FURNITURE OF SILVER.

The Magnificent Boudoir Outfit of a Boston Millionaire's Bride.

In the private office of a great manufacturing jewelry house of this city, one corner is fitted up in a unique manner for the delectation of chosen customers who may be admitted to look at it. It connects with a ladies' dressing-room, all the furnishings of which are made of silver and plate-glass. No less splendid materials have been used in the production of this sumptuous outfit, which is undoubtedly the finest ever manufactured in this country.

The furniture and fittings are in the Louis XV. style. They are beautiful in design, and their elegance is, of course, enchanced by the richness and brightness of the materials used in their construction. They are said to be partially copied from a similar set made for Mme. Dubarry, the mistress of Louis XV., which were seized by the mob during the French revolution and melted down for the sake of the metal in them.

The chief object in this set is the dressing-table. This is a small table, with swelling front and bowed legs, the top being a double-thick sheet of plate-glass set on a sheet of polished silver. The mirror is set in curved standards, and is an oval, inclosed in a silver frame. In the body of the table are drawers, fitted up to hold tools of the toilet, which are also in silver and crystals. Next comes a side table, with an oval top of double plate, rimmed with silver. It is designed in harmony with the dressing-table; as are also the chairs, which are three in number, upholstered with cloth woven of silver thread.

Not the least beautiful object in the collection is the wash-stand. It is of the same metal and design as the rest, and is furnished with a wash-bowl in carved and hammered silver, a waste-water pail to match, and a water-pitcher of harmonious design. The towel-frame is of silver; and with the wash set goes a silver foot-bowl, which sets in a short-legged silver stand.

Each piece is charmingly decorated with graceful scroll work relieved by flowered ornamentation of daisies. An additional richness and variety is secured by having the hearts of the daisies in gold. In order to further vary the effects of the silver and render it brilliant without being glaring, acids have been used to cloud and color it in parts.

The metal used in constructing this masterpiece of extravagance was silver bullion, purchased at the sub-treasury, and given just enough alloy to render it tenuous enough for working. It is all worked by hand, the metal having been forged into rods, hammered into sheets, and then welded, riveted, and set up in rough, all the ornaments being chiseled or hammered on it by manual labor. The chiseling was done by one artist in metal, and the repousse or hammered by another, and both were employed upon the work upward of four months.

The set is intended for the wife of a Boston millionaire who is building a palace for himself at the Hub. No one but the owner and the manufacturer has any idea of what it will cost, and the latter nearly had a fit when he discovered that a reporter of one of "those dreadful newspapers" had actually examined the magnificent luxury of wasteful ostentatiousness.—N. Y. News.

THE CHEERY LAUGH.

It Ceases to Be Melodious When It Issues From a Middle-Aged Larynx.

There is no laughter so musical, none so innocent, none so evidently spontaneous as that of little children. The grimmest misanthrope must admit its charm. As we grow older, though we be still of hilarious tendencies, there is no longer any music, or only of the tongs and tin-kettle kind, in our cachinnations. Some of us, and they, perhaps, not the least genial, having realized how literally true is Schiller's "Ernst ist das Leben," find a difficulty in getting out any vocal hilarity at all. We may be laughing inwardly, but the sound we are capable of emitting is the mere ghost of what we could compass in earlier years. Others, again, carry their risibility with them into extreme old age. Tottering on the verge of their final exit they yet laugh with the loudest. It is partly hereditary, this patriarchal guffaw, for a laugh is sometimes handed down from father to son, like a nose or a sneeze. Carlyle mentions that he himself enjoyed an inheritance of this nature, and this no doubt accounts in great measure for his intolerance of those to whom an audible expression of mirth had been denied. Had he been one whose utterances, cachinnatory and other, were not habitually made with all pedals down and all stops out, we should belike have heard nothing of the moral depravity and hopeless prospects of the man who can not laugh. And the laughter of maturity, is it, after all, so very lovable and grateful to the ear? Mark attentively the notes of merriment as they issue from a middle-aged larynx. Is it possible that this succession of short barks, this alternation of gasps and wheezings, really connotes an irrepressible gayety within? Are these horrible distortions of a respectable householder's features, in sober truth, a sure sign that he is vastly amused? If so it be, then they, the fountain of whose mirth is hermetically sealed, are not wholly without consolation.

Nevertheless, it can not be denied that, for getting on in the world, a cheery laugh is a valuable ally. We are apt to think well of, and to befriend, if necessary, the man who never fails to see the point of our witticisms, and gives loud and hearty evidence of his appreciation. A grave man is a bore; to be taciturn and uniformly serious one should have no need of the world's good opinion or assistance. To sit in a gay company a dumb dog, unable to say good things one's self or to cackle, melodiously or otherwise, at the good things of one's neighbors, is considered a crime, which no moral or intellectual virtues can expiate.—Gentleman's Magazine.

—Passing Philanthropist—"Boy, you shouldn't beg; its disgraceful! But don't cry—I'll give you five cents for that paper there." Urchin (blubbering)—"I—I wouldn't beg if I could find enough—ch—chumps as you every day!"